



A community that cares, loves & supports.

In Support of H.B. No. 6947: An Act Concerning State Contracts for Human Services

Submitted By: David Borzellino, Executive Director, Farrell Treatment Center

Public Hearing Date: March 12, 2015

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, my name is David Borzellino, Executive Director, Farrell Treatment Center. FTC has been providing quality substance abuse and mental health treatment to adults on Medicaid since 1973. Our mission is to provide treatment to the underprivileged adults. We are among the 500+ member agencies of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits.)

I would like to share my support for H.B. 6947, An Act Concerning State Contracts for Human Services. This bill asks the Governor and legislators to appropriately fund nonprofit providers by reviewing reimbursement rates and cost standards every two years to adjust rates for inflation or Consumer Price Index (CPI) growth. This change to the contracting process is necessary because the state has failed to adequately fund nonprofit providers for the last two decades and most recently, issued four rounds of rescissions since November 2012, forcing many nonprofits to close, compete against one another for scarce resources, layoff employees (*FTC layoff two employees already*), reduce benefit packages (*FTC has significant altered our benefits*); thereby further weakening our effectiveness and sustainability.

At FTC have seen an increase in demand for services yet we cannot provide the services. When we lost two employees, we were unable to provide the individual counseling clients were requesting. For the last 10 years, FTC has ranked in the top ten at DMHAS in terms of customer satisfaction. Our Staff retention is difficult as we cannot compete with the State agencies. Two employees recently accepted positions at DMHAS for significantly higher pay, better benefits and the support of a union. My wife works at a larger non profits that has grants from DCF as well as DMHAS and they encounter the same issues. Consequentially, many of us struggle to keep a quality workforce, as we experience high turnover with employees considering state employment or similar jobs providing higher wages and better benefits. In turn, high turnover adversely affects the clients we serve who have grown comfortable with the providers.

DMHAS rightfully has a priority on clients receiving care quickly. In our experience, when we refer a client to another agency, wait times increased from 2-3 days to 2-3 weeks. It is well known that the sooner a client receives an appointment, the likely hood of attending is greatly improved reducing adverse consequences.

This bill aims at reversing a troubling and unacceptable trend and will go a long way toward strengthening a severely weakened system. I would also encourage committee members to add

substitute language in Section 2 to ensure that state contracts for human services in the Dept. of Aging, Dept. of Correction, Dept. of Economic and Community Development, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Housing, Dept. of Labor, Dept. of Rehabilitation Services, Office of Early Childhood, Office of Policy and Management are included to also receive adequate reimbursement rates that reflect the actual costs of providing contracted services.

While any increase in funding may seem impossible in these tough budget years, policymakers simply can't afford not to do this. Without this funding increase, many nonprofit providers may have to reduce services which would likely result in your constituents travelling farther, paying more, waiting longer for programs, if not losing services altogether; and for nonprofits in your communities to close their doors. The reality is that the health and human service nonprofit providers have been continuously underfunded over the past two decades, pushing many of us to our breaking point. Additionally, staff will be laid-off adding to the unemployment numbers.

This legislation makes a commitment to properly invest in the nonprofit sector, a commitment the state has already made through 1,585 POS contracts serving approximately 500,000 residents (15% of the population). I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and respectfully remind you to review and share the [CT Nonprofit Alliance report](#) that shows how investing in the nonprofit sector will improve service delivery, increase economic activity, and save taxpayer money; a "win-win" for policymakers working to strengthen the economy, the nonprofit workforce trying to make ends meet, and most importantly, the clients and their families who count-on efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality services.

Bottom line, those in most of need of treatment will be unable to access it resulting in increased homelessness, legal involvement, additional burden on hospital emergency rooms and increased hospitalizations.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

David Borzellino
Executive Director
Farrell Treatment Center
New Britain, CT
860-225-4641
www.farrell-tc.com